

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today strongly defended a federal ban on illegal Internet gambling.

Bachus spoke at a congressional hearing on proposed regulations that would fully implement the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act.

Bachus, who cosponsored the legislation passed in 2006, said, "Illegal Internet gambling ruins lives and tears families apart. Study after study has shown that gambling is a scourge on our society that leads to addiction, bankruptcy, family conflict, and crime. Illegal Internet gambling intensifies the devastation wrought by gambling by bringing the casino into the home."

Bachus said that college students are especially vulnerable to the addiction of illegal Internet gambling. He noted that in the first year following enactment of the law, illegal Internet gambling among college students declined from 5.8% to 1.5%.

During the hearing, Bachus urged federal regulators to quickly finalize strong rules blocking credit cards and related financial instruments from being used for illegal Internet gambling.

"Any success the act has had in decreasing the rate of illegal Internet gambling will be short-lived if criminals believe it will not be enforced," Bachus said.

Bachus also warned against proposed legislation in Congress that would repeal the ban on illegal Internet gambling, noting he received a letter from 45 state attorneys general supporting the ban. The law was passed with the support of a coalition that included college and university presidents, the American Psychiatric Association, and all major sports organizations including the NCAA.

The hearing today was conducted by the House Financial Services Committee, where Bachus is Ranking Member.